

**Abstract 300**

**TITLE:** HIV-Infected Persons In Alabama (AL) And Mississippi (MS):  
Characteristics In Non-Urban Settings

**AUTHORS:** Fawal HJ<sup>1</sup>, Funkhouser E<sup>1</sup>, Agee BS<sup>1</sup>, Hues S<sup>2</sup>, Holmberg SD<sup>3</sup>, Vermund SH<sup>1</sup>,  
<sup>1</sup>Univ of AL at Birmingham, <sup>2</sup>Univ of S Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS and <sup>3</sup>CDC,  
Atlanta, GA.

**BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES:** The HIV epidemic continues to expand in the rural, non-urban Communities of the Deep South. To better define the epidemic in AL and MS, we characterized the socio demographic, migratory patterns, and risk behaviors of HIV-infected persons living in the respective state's rural and small cities (termed non-urban).

**METHODS:** A cross-sectional study using comprehensive interviews of HIV-infected persons was conducted at 19 (AL) and 9 (MS) locations.

**RESULTS:** Of the 771 [592(AL), 179(MS)] interviewees, 560 (73%) were men (45% black) and 211 (27%) were women (67% black). Of the 746 participants who were sexually active during their putative period of infection, 381 (51%) were men who had sex with men (MSM); 156 (21%) were heterosexual men, and 209 (28%) were women. Men were older than women (36 +0.3 vs. 33 + 0.6 years,  $p<0.001$ ) and less likely to have had only steady sexual partners (21% vs. 47% for women,  $p=0.001$ ). The median number of sexual partners was 5 and was higher for men than 2 women (median 5 vs 3,  $p=0.001$ ). Overall, 24% "usually used" condoms; more MSM (29%) than heterosexual men or women (19% respectively) were in this group ( $p=0.005$ ). Injection drug use (IDU) was reported by 12% of persons; heterosexual men (19%) were more likely to report IDU ( $p=0.003$ ) than MSM (9%) or was reported by women (11%). Selling of sex for money or drugs was reported by 18%: heterosexual men (8%), MSM (18%), and women (24%). Among the Alabama subjects, 10% reported visiting an STD clinic in the past year, (13% of blacks vs 7% of whites,  $p=0.03$ ) and 63% thought they acquired their HIV infection within Alabama.

**CONCLUSION:** High-risk sexual behavior is far more common than IDU among HIV-infected persons in care settings of the Deep South. Women with HIV were less likely to report personal histories of high-risk sexual activity than men. Most HIV is likely acquired locally rather than being acquired out-of-state.

**PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hala Fawal, MPH, MBA

**Address:** 1665 University Boulevard; 220A Ryals Building  
Birmingham, AL 35294-022

**Telephone:** (205) 975-8699

**Fax:** (205) 934-7157

**E-mail:** hfawal@uab.edu